

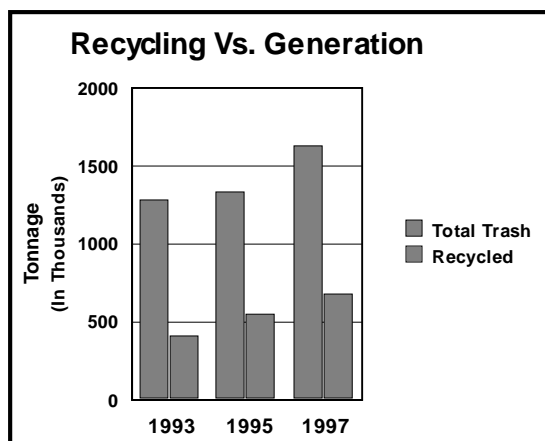


Recycle This! Newsletter

*Newsletter of the Maine State Planning Office, Waste Management & Recycling Program * March 1999*

Mainers are Still Committed to Recycling!

The State Planning Office (SPO) has calculated the state recycling rate for 1997: Maine's recycling rate has reached 42% (up from 33% in 1993; 41% in 1995). This rate includes residential and commercial recycling tonnages. At 42%, Maine's recycling rate ranks among the top 10% in the country. And, while this rate represents only a slight increase from 1995, maintaining this high level of recycling in the face of fluctuating markets for recyclables is a significant accomplishment.



Perhaps equally significant is the fact that recycling has become a common practice among Maine households. In a recent survey (conducted by Market Decisions of South Portland, Maine) of 400 randomly selected Maine households, the vast majority of people surveyed (82%) reported that they currently recycle at home. The survey also showed that many of these Mainers who are already recycling would recycle more if they had the opportunity.

While Maine's recycling performance is excellent, more work needs to be done if the

state is to achieve its goal of recycling 50 percent of its solid waste. Future efforts will focus on increasing the composting of organic wastes, such as food waste, lawn clippings, and leaves, improving the reuse and recycling of hard-to-manage wastes found in construction and demolition debris, and developing markets for recyclable materials.

At the same time, Maine must continue to make improvements in the recovery of glass, metal, paper, and other common household and business materials. Although the survey results indicate that a majority of Mainers are committed to recycling, they also point to several areas where recycling participation could be enhanced through the reevaluation and improvement of existing programs in combination with increased public education. For example, 79% of Maine recyclers indicated that they would recycle more if additional materials were accepted in their local recycling programs; 77% of recyclers thought that they would recycle more if more educational information were provided; and 66% of recyclers said they would recycle more if less preparation of recyclables were required.

Also, among those Mainers who admitted that they do not recycle, 2 out of 3 indicated that they would be encouraged to begin recycling if curbside collection of recyclables was offered; 63% of the non-recyclers said they would be likely to begin recycling if recyclables were collected more frequently; and 62% said they would start recycling if they were required to pay a fee to get rid of trash (while anything recycled was collected for free).

What's the Latest on Solid Waste Issues in Maine?



This is a busy period for the solid waste industry in Maine. Three major areas of activity are:

1) Municipal — this is the time of year when many communities begin the budget process for the coming year and review their current solid waste management system for effectiveness. One of the common issues that communities must deal with is the calculation of 'avoided costs' when comparing disposal programs to alternate management systems such as recycling and composting. SPO has developed a new fact sheet on this topic and would be happy to help communities with the development of the avoided cost figure.

2) Private sector — the recent acquisition of Waste Management Inc. by USA Waste (taking the name Waste Management Inc.) has resulted in the reorganization of some companies in the southern part of the state. A proposed merger between Casella Waste Systems, Inc. and KTI, Inc., was announced on January 13. According to the press release, the anticipated merger should be completed during the second calendar quarter of 1999.

3) Legislative — there are expected to be over a dozen bills introduced this session dealing with solid waste issues, from proposed changes to the land application of sludges to a review of the state's solid waste management policy.

Community in Focus — the City of Portland will be implementing a residential curbside recycling and a 'pay-as-you-throw' trash collection program. The new program is set to begin in July.

Waste Plan: A Tool for Evaluating Solid Waste Costs

As solid waste costs have risen through the 90's, municipalities have continued to look for ways to get their solid waste budget under control. In response to this problem, a few tools have been developed to help town administrators evaluate their options for managing solid waste. One tool that seems to have promise is a software program developed by the Tellus Institute called "WastePlan." This program, which was developed in the late 80's and has been continually refined, now includes full cost accounting features.

The main features of the program are that it:

- prompts the user for the needed data and information,
- organizes this information, and
- does calculations and creates a variety of reports.



The State Planning Office recently purchased WastePlan and has been working to promote this tool as a way for towns to evaluate possible changes in their solid waste programs. To date, SPO has successfully worked with 2 towns (Auburn & Portland) and is starting to work with Damariscotta and Oxford Solid Waste Region.

So far the results have been encouraging. Portland used WastePlan to look at how changing over to curbside recycling with a Pay-As-You-Throw program would effect solid waste costs and diversion rates. What they found was that they could add curbside collection without significantly increasing their overall solid waste costs—even before including revenues from bag sales.

In addition, many towns are interested in determining costs for their current program based on full cost accounting methods, which allows towns to develop a more accurate picture of how much their program truly costs. For example, Auburn needed baseline numbers on their (cont'd on page 4)

Market Update

*contributed by Kathy Guerin,
Maine Resource Recovery Association*

Fortunately, 1998 is behind us. Conditions in the marketplace appear to be improving as the new year progresses. Already we have seen upward movement in February on all paper grades of \$5-\$10/ton. Baled tin cans have improved by \$15/ton in the past 80 days. Ferrous scrap prices have also recovered, but ever so slightly, as steel imports into the US are declining. Market analysts are predicting the scrap metal prices will slowly increase during 1999 as those imports continue to shrink throughout the year. HDPE pricing is stable, and if there is an increase, we will likely see it in this first quarter due to demand by pipe manufacturers and flower pot makers.

Mixed paper, a broad term used for a variety of paper fibres, is very marketable. Before a town starts processing this material, they should get a specification from their markets, as mixed paper means different

things to different mills. The Cooperative Marketing program is developing a specification for its members that is broad enough to appeal to a wide range of markets. One market that the Coop sells to is using 30% mixed paper and 60% corrugated cardboard in its manufacturing process. This grade is becoming more popular with mills and there is no difficulty moving it. There have been times during 1998 that it was movement only, but we were often able to move it for \$4-\$5/ton. Today that price is \$7/ton (net to members) vs. \$55/ton tipping fee and an average \$20/ton transportation fee for disposal.

Textiles have decreased in price by nearly 50% and leveled out around \$40/ton this winter. The once trendy market is settling down and we are watching to see where this goes. Moisture and dirt are the two contaminants to avoid. Wearable clothing and bedding make up the majority of the volume.

New markets are being offered by the MRRA this spring. Watch this column or attend the Annual Recycling & Solid Waste Conference for more information.

Ford Spokesman to Deliver Keynote Speech at Annual Conference

Andy Acho, Director of Environmental Outreach and Safety at Ford's world headquarters in Dearborn, Michigan will give the keynote speech at the 6th Annual Recycling and Solid Waste Conference and Recyclathon. With a world wide commitment to full circle production from one of the planet's largest corporations as his backdrop, Mr. Acho will address Ford's commitment to recycled content products and "closing the loop", within Ford facilities.

The only statewide get-together of solid waste and recycling operators, the Annual Recycling and Solid Waste Conference returns to the Samoset in Rockport on Monday and Tuesday April 5th and 6th. The Recyclathon portion of the event will again be held at the Mid Coast Solid Waste Corporation Recycling Facility in Rockport. Forklift certification will

be offered on Monday in two morning sessions in order to allow all of the operators a chance to participate in the Recyclathon in the afternoon.

"The changing landscape, what the future holds" is the theme of this year's conference. Workshop topics will include:

- America recycles day;
- a voluntary operator certification program;
- a look at the numbers, recycling rates, and what they really mean;
- recycling at colleges and universities;
- markets, marketing and the forecast for 99-00; and
- what to look for in hiring a waste and recycling service contractor.

Sessions on "hard to manage" waste will feature household hazardous waste, universal waste, and mercury containing devices.

Tuesday's program highlight will be a round table open forum on the changing solid waste landscape and (cont'd on page 4)

New Maine Guide Gives Green Light to Municipal Composting

There has never been a better time for towns to consider composting leaves and yard trimmings. That's according to a soon to be published Community Guide to Composting Leaf and Yard Trimmings in Maine, co-produced by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (ME DEP) and the State Planning Office (SPO), Waste Management and Recycling Program.

The timing of the new Compost Guide is appropriate for several reasons:

The new regulations are in place

The ME DEP has recently published the new solid waste management rules. The guidelines (chap. 409) have streamlined the application process for a permit by rule for composting leaf and yard trimmings, and provide a clear regulatory framework for legal and environmentally sound compost operations.

Access to technical assistance

Where Maine really shines. Our state is home to two nationally recognized resources on composting. The Maine Compost Team and the Compost School are cooperative efforts by staff from SPO, ME DEP, the Department of Agriculture, the cooperative extension service of the University of Maine and the University of Maine at Orono. These programs and the many other levels of available training and technical assistance are fully described in the reference section of the "guide."

Composting is a proven technique in Maine

Composting should no longer be seen as experimental or a fad. While research will always continue on the process itself and new uses for the finished product, composting has been an established feature of the Maine landscape and a well-proven solid waste management technique for over a decade.

Private sector compost operations

There is a healthy private sector compost industry engaged in research and development, compost production, market development, and consumer education.

The potential benefits of a municipal compost site to your community include:

Lower costs

Compost programs divert material from disposal at either landfills or incinerators, lowering the transport, tipping, and other associated disposal costs. This in turn extends the life of in state landfills, and helps to make the best use of our incinerator capacity.

Benefits to the environment

The application of compost can improve soil quality, reduce water consumption and non point source pollution. Diverting leaf and yard trimmings from landfills reduces the threat of air and water pollution, as well as the air emissions and ash from incinerators, which must be managed as a special waste.

Improved public relations and increased awareness

Educating citizens to take part in a community compost program increases their waste awareness and potential participation in other waste reduction/recycling efforts. A well run compost program is a great demonstration of the full circle of waste to resources that positively engages and directly benefits the community.

What's in the Guide?

The guide begins with a brief explanation of what composting is and then moves on to descriptions of the four most common methods used (static pile, aerated pile, turned windrow systems, and in-vessel systems) and includes pictures of Maine examples of each.

Part Three of the guide takes you through the critical decision making process of selecting and developing a compost site by asking the following questions:

- what are the community needs,
- what are the resources of your facility,
- what are the project's needs and requirements?

The answers to these questions are applied to the site investigation and development process.

To make this process more convenient, the guide contains a complete set of the requirements of chapter 409, section 8 of the new solid waste regulations for easy access

and reference.

Part 4 is a step-by-step approach to site operations and management, starting with recipe development, feed stock preparation, turning, and curing. This section emphasizes the importance of taking and recording pile temperature and using the results to determine what to do and when to do it.



Since nothing runs perfectly, certainly not compost, the guide takes you through a trouble shooting process of symptom, cause, and solution. The section ends with the distribution of the final product and consumer education.

The last section is Maine-specific, dealing with seasonal changes in conditions of moisture and temperature, as well as availability of different feed stocks. It also includes a special focus on composting during the winter.

The guide contains an index, reference section, a list of current sources for technical assistance, and a sample monitoring form to track the daily changes in the compost process and operation.

ME DEP and SPO plan to distribute a copy of the guide in three ring binder form to every municipality in the state.

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WastePlan

(cont'd from page 2)

current solid waste costs; they are putting part of their solid waste collection out to bid to private haulers and were interested in knowing what is realistic to expect for bids. WastePlan calculated how much their current program costs and also looked at a few changes to their program, such as different trucks and collection schedules.

While these examples include two of Maine's larger cities, SPO is also working with smaller towns to evaluate the costs of building a local transfer station and adding a Pay-As-You-Throw program. For more information, please contact Lisa Baldwin at 287-9074.

Conference

(cont'd from page 2)

what the future holds for Maine and the region. Topics of discussion will include how to safely navigate programs into the next decade, meeting goals, providing service and keeping costs within limits.

The SPO booth will feature an exhibit on recycling rates and mapping solid waste and recycling programs, and a demonstration of WastePlan, the software package that is featured on page 2 of this newsletter.

So mark down April 5th & 6th on your calendar, don't forget to register, and we will see you at the Samoset!

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• In each issue of *Recycle This!* Newsletter, SPO will offer an insert to a different
• environmental organization within the state in an effort to highlight various
• programs available throughout Maine. This issue's insert was contributed
• by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection.
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Coming Soon

The **Chewonki Foundation** is in the process of printing an updated version of ***Pathways to a Sustainable Future***, the waste reduction and recycling curriculum developed in the early 90's. The new version of the curriculum will be available soon. For more information, call Chewonki directly at 882-7323.

The **6th Annual Recycling & Solid Waste Conference**, April 5&6, Rockport. Please see the feature on page 2 for more information.

Earth Day is April 22nd! Call SPO for suggestions on how to celebrate Earth Day in your municipality!